

CLAIMS:

1. An assembly of:

a watercraft appliance;

one or more threaded fastening elements; and

5. one or more retaining elements,

wherein the appliance is for attachment to a surface of a watercraft using said threaded fastening elements in combination with one or more cooperating elements threadable on said threaded fastening elements, and wherein the appliance has one or more apertures, each  
10 said threaded fastening element being retained in a respective one of said apertures and being held against rotation with respect to the appliance up to a threshold torque by a respective one of said retaining elements, thereby allowing rotation of said threaded fastening element at torques higher than the threshold torque.

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2. An assembly according to claim 1 wherein the appliance is a winch.

3. An assembly according to claim 1 wherein the appliance is a  
20 winch and the watercraft to which the winch is to be attached is a sailboat.

4. An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said retaining element holds said fastening element with respect to the appliance  
25 by frictional engagement with said fastening element and with said aperture.

5. An assembly according to claim 4 wherein said fastening element has a head and a shaft, said retaining element being located  
30 on said shaft, abutted at the opposite side of said aperture to said

head, and wherein at least part of said shaft projects from said aperture.

6. An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said threaded  
5 fastening element is a screw.

7. An assembly according to claim 6 wherein said retaining element is a lock washer.

10 8. An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said retaining element substantially prevents translational movement of the fastening element along the axis of the hole in the appliance.

9. An assembly according to claim 1 wherein the retaining element  
15 has an engagement portion which provides additional securing of the fastening element with respect to the appliance by jamming between the fastening element and the aperture in the appliance.

10. An assembly of a sailboat winch and one or more screws and one  
20 or more lock washers, wherein the sailboat winch is for attachment to a deck of a sailboat using said screws in combination with one or more nuts, and wherein the appliance has one or more mounting apertures, each said screw being retained in a respective one of said apertures and being held against rotation with respect to the  
25 winch up to a threshold torque by a respective one of said lock washers, thereby allowing rotation of said screw at torques higher than the threshold torque.

11. A method of attaching an appliance to a surface of a  
30 watercraft using one or more fastening elements, including providing an assembly of:

a watercraft appliance;

one or more threaded fastening elements; and

one or more retaining elements,

wherein the appliance has one or more apertures, each said threaded

5 fastening element being retained in a respective one of said apertures and being held against rotation with respect to the appliance up to a threshold torque by a respective one of said retaining elements,

10 the method further including the step of fastening the appliance to the surface of the watercraft by threading and tightening cooperating elements onto said threaded fastening elements using a torque lower than the threshold torque, each fastening element being retained in place with respect to the appliance by its respective retaining element before and during attachment of the appliance.

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12. A method according to claim 11 wherein the retaining element remains in place even after attachment of the appliance to the watercraft.

20 13. A method according to claim 11 including the step of locating a sealing element between the appliance and the surface of the watercraft.

25 14. A method according to claim 11 wherein each retaining element acts as a sealing element between the appliance and the surface of the watercraft.

15. A method according to claim 11 wherein the attachment of the appliance to the surface of the watercraft does not require  
30 disassembly of the appliance.

16. A method of producing an assembly of:

a watercraft appliance;

one or more threaded fastening elements; and

one or more retaining elements,

5 wherein the appliance has one or more apertures,

the method including retaining each said threaded fastening element  
in a respective one of said apertures and holding said fastening  
elements against rotation with respect to the appliance up to a  
threshold torque using a respective one of said retaining elements.

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17. A method according to claim 16 wherein the appliance includes  
a removable cover, the threaded fastening elements being assembled  
with the appliance by removing the cover, the method including the  
subsequent step of replacing the cover before the appliance is

15 attached to a watercraft.